



## **LINKING TO EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES PRE-RELEASE (LEAP) SPECIALIZED AMERICAN JOB CENTERS**

The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Specialized American Job Centers grants are a pilot program that will support the development and implementation of specialized American Job Centers (AJCs) within county, municipal, or regional correctional facilities and will link participants to a continuum of post-release services in community-based AJCs, which will enable transitioning offenders to prepare for employment prior to release and to continue with services post-release. The purpose of these grants is to assist soon to be released local inmates to prepare for employment, thus increasing their opportunities for successful reentry into their home communities. This pilot project seeks to create community-based partnerships between local correctional systems and the local workforce systems by establishing specialized AJCs within county, municipal, or regional correctional facilities and linking transitioning offenders with a range of community-based workforce services that lead to successful employment.

The Department awarded approximately \$500,000 each to 20 grantees in 2015 to 11 grantees in 2016 for a total of approximately \$15,500,000, as authorized by the Second Chance Act and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), as applicable. These grants will provide career services to convicted offenders preparing to transition to their home communities.

LEAP grants will provide opportunities for transitioning offenders to secure services prior to release that will assist them in securing stable employment and developing along career pathways and ease reentry into their communities. Suitable and stable employment is a critical factor in assisting transitioning offenders to remain crime free once released from incarceration. All jail-based specialized AJCs must be designed to enhance access to employment-related services and training and to improve employability for participants by: providing an array of workforce development activities and services authorized under WIA/WIOA and the Second Chance Act, including all core and intensive services authorized under WIA and/or all career services authorized under WIOA; providing access to information about training opportunities and career guidance; providing strong partnerships with community-based AJCs and directly linking participants to a continuum of services and support upon release, including enrolling transitioning offenders into WIA/WIOA services where appropriate; and resulting in the attainment of employment or educational placements upon release, where applicable.